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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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SUBJECT: HIE-32

DISCUSSION

CURRENT COMMUNIST MILITARY SITUATION IN KOREA

The Chinese Communists have suffered an estimated 208,000 casualties and the North Koreans have suffered 411,000 casualties from the start of the Korean campaign to _____. These losses represent a major portion of the original highly trained North Korean invasion Army. It is believed that to obtain replacements, practically all physically fit males in North Korea have now been conscripted. Chinese Communist losses include an appreciable number of well trained hard core Communist troops, but it is believed that the majority of Chinese troops and casualties in Korea have been ex-Nationalists or inexperienced conscripts. Despite the heavy manpower losses, Communist

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forces in Korea are estimated to total 536,000, consisting of 293,000 Chinese and 243,000 North Koreans. These forces are now in a process of regroupment north of the 38th Parallel and there are indications that substantial Communist reserves along the Sino-Korean border are now moving south into the battle zone. Total Chinese Communist reserves in Manchuria number 368,000 Field Force troops, some of whom may have been supplied with Soviet equipment, and 370,000 Military District troops. There are indications that additional troops are now moving toward Manchuria from China proper, where there are a total of 2,488,000 Field Force and Military District troops.

Chinese equipment losses, mainly small arms and motors, have been slight and the Chinese have fairly sizable reserve stocks in Manchuria. In addition, the Mukden arsenal is estimated to be capable of meeting a major part of Chinese Communist requirements in Korea for small arms and ammunition. North Korean forces, dependent almost entirely on the USSR for equipment, lost a substantial portion of

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their armament during the northward retreat in September 1950. Although the North Korean Army is now reequipped with Soviet weapons, losses of heavy material such as tanks and artillery apparently have not been replaced. The Soviet Union possesses in the Far East adequate supplies for a greatly increased program of support to Communist forces in Korea.

UN forces have destroyed or damaged approximately 225 Communist aircraft but most of this damage was inflicted early in the war before the North Korean airforce withdrew to Manchuria. Since that time the Communists have not committed their air potential which is gradually increasing with Soviet direction and technical assistance. The Chinese Communist and North Korean Air Forces are estimated to have available now a combined strength of approximately 760 aircraft of fighter, ground attack, light bomber and transport types.

COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES FOR CONTINUED OPERATIONS IN KOREA

Although Communist forces in Korea have suffered heavy casualties ~~and~~ they still have large reserves in Manchuria and additions to

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this reserve are believed moving into the area from China proper.

Fairly sizable stocks of military equipment exist in Manchuria, and the Soviet Union possesses in the Far East or can deliver from current production, adequate supplies for a greatly increased program of logistic support to Communist forces in Korea. The Chinese Communists and North Koreans are holding in reserve approximately 760 aircraft of all types.

There are, however, several factors limiting the use in Korea of this reserve of manpower, equipment and air potential. So long as UN forces retain air supremacy, the Communists will have considerable difficulty in supplying an army any larger than the present force. If the combined North Korean-Chinese Communist air force were fully committed to support ground troops or to cover lines of communication, it is estimated that combat and maintenance attrition would reduce its combat effectiveness to an insignificant level in approximately a week of sustained operations.

We believe, therefore, that the Communist forces in Korea, unless

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substantially reinforced by air and sea forces, are incapable of launching major offensives to drive UN forces from Korea. We believe that they have the potential for local offensives based on massed manpower and we also believe they are capable of fighting an indefinite war of attrition, retaining control of a substantial portion of North Korea against UN forces at their present strength.

The USSR has the capability of intervening effectively in the Korean war. Soviet intervention in order to be decisive, however, would have to be on a large-scale overt basis and the USSR would have to be fully prepared for US or UN counteraction against the Soviet Far East with consequent global war.

EFFECTS OF THE KOREAN CAMPAIGN ON BASIC CHINESE CAPABILITIES

The Chinese Communists have to date been able to support their military effort in Korea without seriously disrupting the Chinese economy, without materially affecting the government's capability to cope with internal dissident elements, and without reducing substantially Chinese Communist capabilities for concurrent operations against

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Indochina, Burma or Hong Kong, It is probable that the commitment in Korea already has reduced Chinese Communist military strength that was available for an assault on Taiwan. We believe, however, that Peiping, should it wish to do so, still has the capability to mount an invasion.

If the Chinese Communists undertake a war of attrition in Korea, however, their basic capabilities may be seriously reduced. There would be an increasing strain on the Chinese economy resulting from the inflationary pressures resulting from a substantial expansion of the armed forces, the continued postponement of reconstruction projects, the serious reduction of agricultural output in Manchuria as a result of a diversion of labor and draft animals in support of the Korean war, and the further strain on the transportation system. If operations in Korea were prolonged to the extent of requiring further large numbers of Chinese Communist Field Forces to be withdrawn from internal areas as replacements, there would be a serious reduction in the government's ability to control dissident elements and to carry out

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national progress such as land reform. Thus a continuing large-scale Chinese Communist commitment in Korea would eventually result in a significant reduction of their capabilities for operations elsewhere.

PROBABLE CHINESE COMMUNIST INTENTIONS IN KOREA

The Chinese Communists probably now realize they cannot achieve an early victory in Korea. We do not believe, however, that the Chinese Communists are now or will be willing to depart from their previously announced terms in order to negotiate a peaceful Korean settlement. They frequently have reaffirmed to their own people the announced intention of driving UN forces from Korea, in recent broadcasts from Peiping, while warning that "to annihilate completely the imperialist brigands...necessarily requires a considerably long time..." Under these circumstances it is likely that Peiping and Moscow are preparing for a war of attrition in Korea, possibly planning to withdraw Communist forces farther north to avoid major contacts and to shorten supply lines, in the hope of sapping the morale of UN

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troops, and gradually building up offensive capabilities. At the same time, Peiping might participate in protracted negotiations or exploit other tensions among the UN allies in order to create discord among the governments supporting UN action in Korea.

If, at some future date, the Chinese Communists should estimate that they were in danger of complete defeat in Korea, or if the strain of the Korean campaign should seriously threaten China's internal stability and defensive power, the Chinese Communists might offer to negotiate a settlement with their minimum conditions being a return to the status quo ante in Korea. We believe, however, that unless the deterioration in the Communist position in Korea coincided with an overall depreciation of the power position of the Soviet bloc and a shift in overall Soviet policy to one of accommodation and conciliation, the Chinese Communists would be unlikely to make a serious effort to liquidate their commitment in Korea by negotiations, other than on terms assuring Communist control of Korea. Rather, they

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would attempt first to acquire substantially increased aid from the Soviet Union to bolster both the forces in Korea and the internal security and economy of China. In the unlikely event that Soviet support proved insufficient, the Communist forces would make a fighting withdrawal while preparing to continue guerrilla operations indefinitely within Korea.

We believe that the USSR still looks toward a UN defeat as soon as possible without the direct participation of Soviet forces. However, Moscow has probably estimated that ^{the} Chinese Communists will not be able to expel UN forces from Korea in the near future. Judging from its present attitude, the Kremlin is probably prepared to continue moral, diplomatic and a certain amount of covert military support to the Chinese Communists while avoiding direct intervention. Chinese logistical requirements are such that Soviet material support would not cause a significant drain on the USSR, and the Kremlin may feel that considerable advantage is to be gained through the involvement of the UN, and particularly the US, in a long and inconclusive

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military operation in the Far East.

In any event, the USSR would view with grave concern a UN advance to the Soviet and Chinese borders. It is probable that since the UN forces now threaten again to cross the 38th Parallel, Moscow is making available increased covert military support to the Chinese and North Korean communist forces to insure their capabilities to defend North Korea.

Should the situation develop so that the Chinese Communists faced defeat in Korea, the Kremlin, in order to preserve both its own prestige and Sino-Soviet solidarity, and to achieve at least some if not all of its original objectives, would probably increase substantially its aid to the Communist forces. Such additional assistance might consist of further air support, supply of heavy equipment and technical assistance, and perhaps "volunteers".

The USSR has, of course, the capability of forcing a withdrawal of UN forces from Korea. Despite the Soviet desires to avoid war, the Kremlin might be placed under almost unavoidable compulsion to take

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such action because failure to intervene might result in the virtual collapse of the Communist position in the Far East. There is not sufficient intelligence to determine whether Soviet failure to intervene in force will seriously strain Communist China's alliance with the USSR.

We believe, nevertheless, that the USSR is unlikely to intervene overtly in Korea unless and until the Kremlin has decided, on the basis of the world situation, that the time is opportune for the commencement of global war. Under such circumstances, operations in Korea would not represent a primary Soviet effort, although the Kremlin would probably attempt to destroy the UN forces deployed there.

EFFECTS OF THE KOREAN WAR ON POSSIBLE COMMUNIST INTENTIONS TO OPERATE ELSEWHERE IN THE FAR EAST

It is probable that Peiping has considered offensive moves against Indochina, Taiwan, Hong Kong and possibly Burma as a means of diverting UN strength from the Korean fighting, and the Chinese still retain

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the capability for undertaking such actions. Although Peiping's failure to exercise this capability is largely explainable in terms other than the needs of the Korean campaign, we believe that the problems involved in an extended commitment in Korea and the psychological impact of reverses inflicted by UN troops have been and will continue to be significant factors in deterring Chinese actions elsewhere in Asia.

Should the Chinese Communists continue to suffer attrition in Korea they would be unlikely to expend additional resources in other large-scale operations. They would attempt instead to develop their defensive capabilities and conserve their striking power until involved in a major war with the West.

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